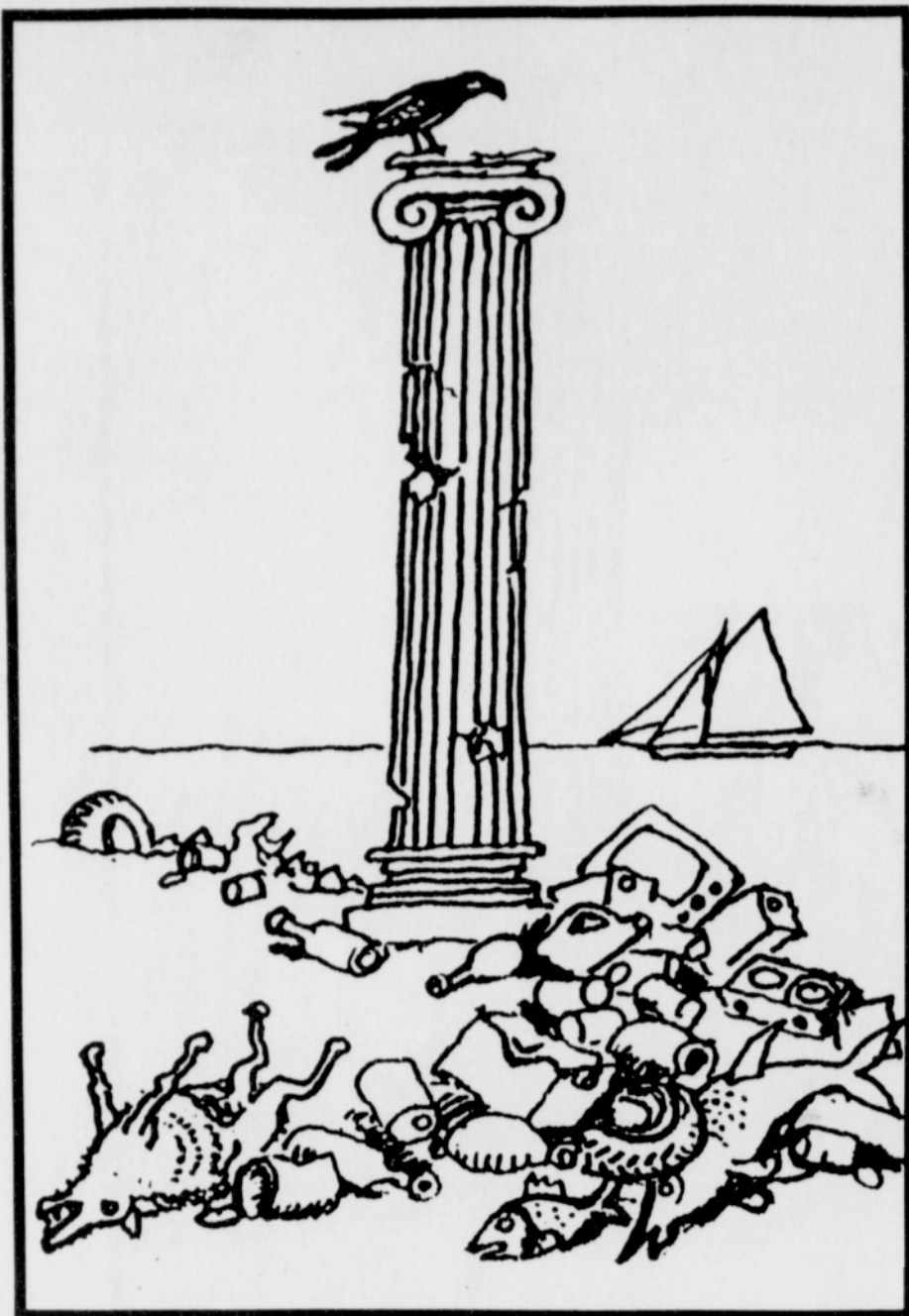


GREEK OLIVECIDE

BY GAIL JACOBSON



AQUAPEACE LOGO

aquapeace
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*an environmental  
group engaged  
in emphasizing  
the fragility of  
the earth's ecological  
balance ...*

*beginning  
in the AEGEAN SEA*

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The olive trees on the Pilion Peninsula in central Greece are 800 years old. They have nourished generations and have been exported to the New World and Asia. Herds of sheep have grazed in their shade, beehives have always been nearby, and farmers cultivated hard-kernel wheat in the burrows pleating the countryside. The trees needed continual pruning, providing heat for winter and cooking.

People lived in harmony with nature. Birds had their nests in the trees and made certain that marauding insects did not take over the harvest.

Recently things have changed. Chemical firms like Hoechst and Bayer — greedy for profits — instigated a war between the vulnerable farmer and his environment. They warned him of a destructive insect population bent on the annihilation of the olive crop. By persuading the farmer effectively, the chemical giants were able to sell tons of insecticide that they were forbidden to sell in their own countries. Today the chemical companies have the highest profits. Tons of carcinogenic poisons are sprayed into the olive orchards and villages with each new harvest. Each olive tastes of bitterness and nearby wellwater is contaminated. In Europe some major supermarkets are boycotting Greek olives and olive oil.

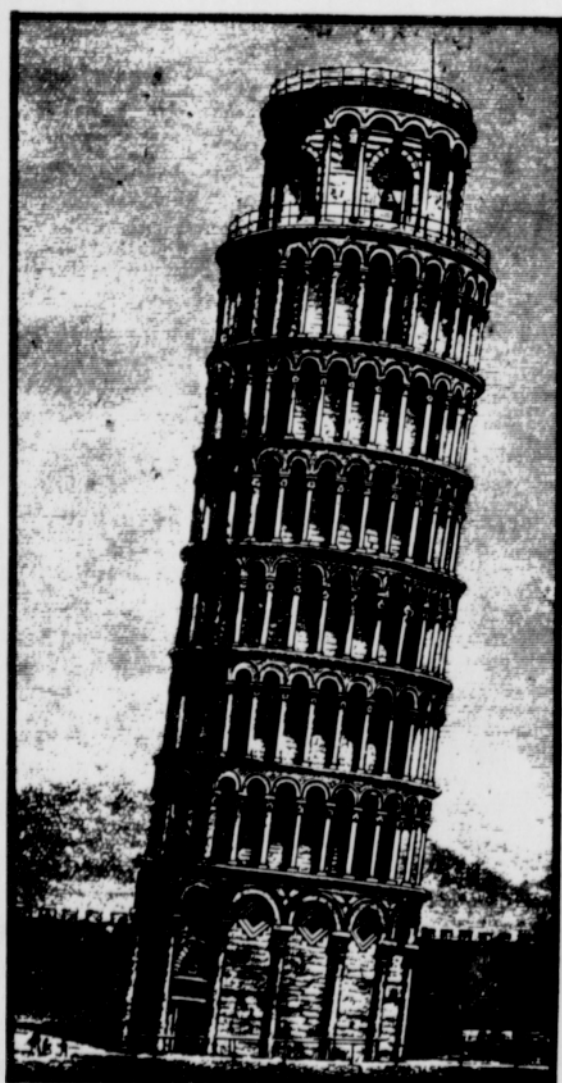
Birds, which were especially effective in holding the olive insects at bay, are dying off. The insects are winning the battle. They are growing more resistant to the chemicals, and are multiplying.

The chemical giants have also won, and the spraying of ever-more deadly poisons continues. An army of unscrupulous pesticide employees has descended with helicopters and airplanes on the olive trees. But also on houses, where water is gathered for cisterns from rooves, on carefully cultivated insecticide-free vegetable gardens, on children at play, on campgrounds and restaurant and hotel terraces. Tourists leave. Elderly people are overcome with coughing attacks. Children suffer irritating rashes, and people of all ages are sick with respiratory problems and nausea.

In many villages where the quality of the water was so superior that the villages were named after this good water, people resort to buying bottled water in plastic bottles.

I am describing a catastrophe. Foreign chemical companies are bombarding Greece with greater destruction than five hundred years of Turkish occupation. This poison will remain in the air, soil and water. Year by year, more of Greece will be contaminated. Future generations will curse their forefathers who have done nothing to stop this ecocide.

Gail Jacobson has lived in Greece since retiring from teaching in 1968. She and her husband are co-founders of "Aquapeace". She recently spent a summer living in a house on Neah Kha Nie Mountain while recovering from pesticide poisoning.



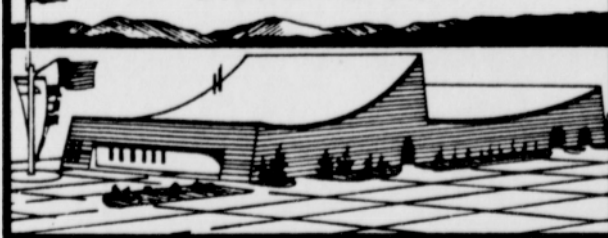
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